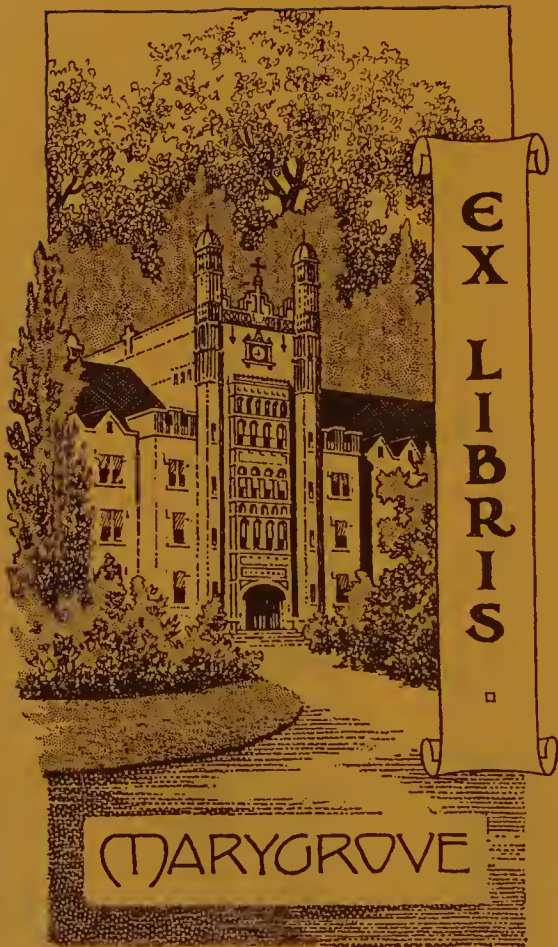


High in Her Tower



Charles Phillips



One more for
the Quill Club

Cecil

August 1, 1927

High in Her Tower

By
Charles Phillips

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which Heaven to gaudy day denies.

—BYRON.

F. T. Kolars and Co.
New York

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FOR
INA COOLBRITH

“High in her Tower”

HIGH IN HER TOWER

*High in her ivory tower
My lady lives,
And from her skyey bower
Such largesse gives,
So fair, of love and beauty,
So rare, of truth and duty,
I fain would live forever in that hour
That finds me sharer of her bounteous dower.*

*The heavens are spread above
For her delight;
With beauty of the dove
The seas bedight,
Hushed to a dreaming measure
To woo, to win her pleasure;
And all the winds lull on the deep in love
For her, the queen, their fealty to prove.*

*All silvery, fold on fold,
Soft stepping down
The vales, long, dark and cold
In barren brown,
Dawn greets my lady smiling;
Then lifts with sweet beguiling
Her maiden veil, in filmy grace unrolled,
And shows how garbed she is in chaliced gold.*

*So, in the shadowed night,
From deep to deep,*

. HIGH IN HER TOWER

*Star answering star, the light
That God would keep
Before us ever burning
Is caught by her discerning
And kindled on and on, from height to height,
Faith's beckoning fire, fanned by Love's gentle
might.*

*Voice of the sea, the air;
Or storm, or calm;
Plunge of the surf, or fair
Soft murmured psalm
Of bright symphonic meadows
Breathing in golden shadows
Their infinite undertone; all, all still share,
Silence or sound, with her their secrets rare.*

*Blest gift, God's light to see,
God's voice to hear!
Ah, sweet that amity
'Twixt smile and tear
That makes her song, so mellow,
The chording of a 'cello,
Wake in my lonely heart Hope's minstrelsy,
Forever singing Love's sweet verity.*

*High in her ivory tower
My lady lives;
But from her golden dower
Such bounty gives
Of truth, of love, of beauty,
Of strength, and high pure duty,
That by her song's allure, her gentle power,
She lifts the world to share her hallowed bower.*

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HIGH IN HER TOWER

[1]

INSCRIPTION FOR A BOOK

OF old so precious was a book that key
And lock were put upon it, to withhold
Its treasured lettering against the mold
And dull erasure of the years . . . But see
How artfully the pen, how lovingly
The prayerful brush, their age-old lore unfold,
How rich in azure tracery ensrolled
The poet's dream, a golden filagree!

. . . Dust is the golden brush; the artful hand
Is vanished as the insubstantial air;
The book lies open now; its azures pale
Before the noonbright day. What can withstand
Time's blurring light? . . . The dream, the
vision, the prayer:
These only through the ages shall prevail.

Look on this newmade page, and, otherwise,
As is the wont of us in human way,
Smile as mayhap you've smiled an idle day

INSCRIPTION FOR A BOOK

To see the labored script that faded lies
Writ on an ancient vellum. . . Yes, but sighs
 Shadow your smiling now; these thoughts
 that play
 Freshly across this glistening sheet array
More than the living present for your eyes.

. . . The past is here already! Turn the
 page—
 Or here or there, mark you how swift the time
 Runs from the moment to the hour. The past
Is here already! Youth, and sudden . . . age!
 Turn back! Turn back! I write my little
 rhyme
 To catch your heart before the lock is fast.

THE STAR-BORN

THERE is a veiled beauty in the stars,
A hidden music in their far-flung fires,
Sweet chording and low after-beat and echo,
Weaving and melting into harmonies
Celestial and so exquisitely fair
That we whose ears attuned are alone
To earthly things scarcely may ever know it—
Though still our searching souls, forever
yearning
Up to the glorious and fretted vault
Of the mysterious heavens for some sign,
Some signal of our long-lost home, may catch
On April eves, or when the dying year
Veils all earth's glories and the firmament
In melancholy loveliness, faint sound
Or whispered intimation of it all.

Ah then the secret tears well up!—we cry
Out of our hearts of common clay to all
The illimitable spaces of the night,
“There is a hidden beauty in the stars,
There is a music in the fields of heaven!”

THE STAR-BORN

—Beauty, though to its vision we be blind;
Music, though to its fine intricacy
Our ears be deaf, long dulled with sordid noise
Of near material things; though yet our souls
Fettered and dumb within their prison walls,
Move in a deathly quiet, listening,
Stir in a swooning silence to make answer,
Yet cannot, for the grave-cloths of the flesh
That mute and muffle them. Still, still we know
There is a music in the far-off stars,
There is a veiled beauty in the skies!

So, lifting in bright moments of desire
Our unavailing hands in supplicance
Unto our high inheritance of light
Lost in the starry-latticed sky above,
Unsatisfied we go. “Not ours,” we cry,
“To taste the tuneful wellsprings of the dawn,
Nor in the soft surcease of twilight rest
On beauty’s dreamy pillow! Only to know,
Only to know—and be denied—is ours.”

Only to know, and be denied—until
(How up we leap to it!) some sudden voice
Comes crying clarion-like and silvery,
With all the silver of the night-time in it,

THE STAR-BORN

To shake and shatter in a shower of light
About our willing ears the song of heaven,
The music of the stars! . . Such hearts, there
be

Of other make than ours, of fairer mold,
Souls of a finer fire, who sing and burn
And glow with the bright harmonies of heaven:
For on some certain nights (not calendared
Save in the Mind of God), when heaven and
earth,

Swept by divine propulsion, leap and meet,
Meet and are fused and molded into one—
(Some birth-nights are there when the primal
planets

Strike and renew their first creation-song)—
On certain nights souls there are born who bring
From that far home we all are exiled from
So much of our bright common heritage
Of beauty and of music and of light
We scarce may own them kin, save reverently
To love them with great awe and tenderness,
And cry, "What gifts are theirs!" With see-
ing eye

They search the hidden beauties of the spheres,
And dream great dreams—yet ever wakeful
walk

THE STAR-BORN

Through the white dews of new-created dawns,
Forever strong to shape and mold their visions
To great reality. Unerringly
They know the perfect measure and true beat
Of all things beautiful and fair and good;
Theirs is the gift to pluck from heavenly fields
The flowers of beauty, scattering them down
In luminous loveliness round our stumbling feet;
Theirs is the power, terrible and swift,
To sweep the starry harpstrings of the night
And strike clear echoes of celestial chords
Into our mute imprisoned souls. Ay, more!—
The very secrets of the stars are theirs;
And oh, what age-old silences they break,
With god-like gesture and compelling eye
What buried glories bid arise and live
And breathe once more; until the noisy world
Is all empeopled with immortal loves,
Imperishable beauties, deathless dreams,
Its clamor hushed to hearken beauty's voice
Intoning all the magic cadences
Music is made of—till our earthly road
Of mortal things illumined is and lovely
With lamps of starlight and enkindled fires
Caught from the topmost beacon-towers of
heaven,

THE STAR-BORN

And all the air an echoing sybil cries,
"There is a veiled beauty in the stars!
There is a music in their far-flung fires!"

So do they sing to us, the Star-born ones,
Whose music stills our hearts and wraps us
round

As if with veils of light . . . until we hear,
Across the waters of eternity,
Far voices calling us, and through our tears
The silver shores of peace—our own, our
own!—

Dreamlike and gentle, yet divinely real,
Inviting us with lifted hearts to come,
Calling to us forever to make haste,
Even though with stumbling feet we run, with
hands

Outstretched through darkness, underneath the
stars. . . .

For now we go no more alone, no more
In anguished silence: now we too may sing,
A little song, a brief refrain, an echo
Of the unearthly music we have heard
The Star-born chanting; now often to our
ears

The dear surprise of other voices comes

THE STAR-BORN

With sudden gladness answering ours, and crying,

“There is a veiled beauty in the night,
There is a hidden music in the stars!”

ROSE IN THE RAIN

FALL, rose petal, fall;
Your hour is done—
You have had your all
Of sky and sun.

Now you must take the winds that burn
And the buffeting rain,
Endure the storm, and learn
What tears are, and pain.

Rose, rose in the rain that drums
Cold death on you, teach me
How to take death when it comes,
Bravely, unflinchingly—

Not grievingly, but strong and tall
As you are, flinging off
Petal and leaf . . . how all
The vanities you doff

Of color and pride, and face
Head high, the flail
Of the whipping wind, the wild lace
And lash of the gale!

ROSE IN THE RAIN

Rose, rose in the rain,
Teach me when I'm undone
To stand, and to drink of the cup of tears and
pain
As I've quaffed the cup of the sun.

MUSIC

THERE is a hunger in my heart,
A longing in my soul, to hear
The voice of Heaven o'er the noise
Of earth that so assails mine ear:

For we are children of the skies,
Exiles and wanderers from home—
See how the stars like candles burn
In windows far from where we roam:

Like candles lit to show the way,
Dear kindly beacons, sure and bright!
But O the heavy journeying,
And O the silence of the night!—

The vasty silences that lie
Between the going and the goal!
Will not God reach a friendly hand
To lift and lead my tired soul?

Will not God speak a friendly word
Above the tumult and the din

MUSIC

Of earthly things—one little word
Above the voice of care and sin?

—He speaks. He answers quick my prayer.
He opens Heaven's lattice wide;
He bids me bathe my brow in airs
Of Heaven, like a flowing tide!

He speaks; He gives unto my soul,
Unto my listening ear, its meed:
He breathes upon me with the breath
Of Music—and my soul is freed

And I am lifted up and held
A little while, a child, to see
The beauty of my Father's House
Which shall no more be shut from me!

"THIS IS THE SEEDTIME OF
HEAVEN"

THE wind comes down through the valley
And bends the unwilling trees
Like slaves at a plunging galley
Adrift on the streaming seas.
There is sound of stress in the forest,
And the steady pour of rain;
And O in a day that is darkening
My heart is full of pain, I cry,
My heart is full of pain.

But the wind—there's a gay sound in it!
And the rain—like a harp it sings
With a rhythmical beat and music
Of greening and golden things.
"For this is the seedtime of Heaven!"
The busy raindrops cry:
Then plant me the little flower of peace
For my harvest, by and by, I cry—
For my harvest by and by.

THE VEIL

DRAW the veil closer, closer! I would fain
Forever in the vision land remain!
There is a shielding sense of peace I crave,
Of shelter from the bruising world. The grave
Alone, perhaps, can truly give it me;
For then my spirit, freed, may range the sea,
And love-attended by unfettered dreams,
Know the sweet truth beyond may-be and seems.
Draw the veil closer! Take me quickly now,
O pilot on the dream-ship's starlit prow!
Save me, I cry! The iron is entering in,
And soon my soul will only hear the din
Of black machinery. For all too soon
My life pulse throbs to this discordant tune,
Beating so tirelessly, my dulling sense
Will yet mark naught but its cold clashing
tense,
And deafened to the song of star and flower,
Bend and be broken in its crushing power.
Draw the veil closer! Save me from the day
That dreadfully impends, when, far away,
The waves of my dear sea in vain will weave
The song I love so well. O let me leave
This alien place before I utterly die—
For even now my soul makes feeble cry!

Solitaire

Why should we faint and fear to live alone,
Since all alone, so Heaven has willed, we die,
Nor even the tenderest heart, and next our own,
Knows half the reasons why we smile and sigh.

—KEBLE.

SOLITAIRE

COLOR of wave or sky,
 Flush of wind on the grass,
Beauty of earth that takes my heart—
 But O, the hearts that pass,
The souls that go me by!

—Or one now halts apart
 A little while, and I,
Revealing and concealing, stand,
 And with a smile, a sigh,
Clasp to my breast the dart,

Hold with a trembling hand,
 Cherished and dear to me,
The hope, the look, the sudden trance
 Of eyes that do not see
Nor mark, nor understand.

Beauty of life—the lance
 Of beauty in my breast;
Love and its sweet applause;
 Endearing dear behest
Of love, lost in a glance—

SOLITAIRE

Or one more closely draws
And draws me closer still,
But by the inexorable laws long set
Of life and living and will
Goes on, and may not pause.

Remember? Or forget?—
But passes, as the light
Dies down, and will not stay:
Stars in the fading night,
Suns that forever set.

Each his appointed way,
Each in self-secret sealed,
Nor even he who halts, who turns
Revealing and concealed,
May tell me or may say. . .

Light that illumines and burns,
Dawn that blooms in the rose,
Stars of the wave and sky,
But O, the eyes that close,
The hearts that pass me by!

SILENCES

(For Ann Miller)

NOT in the shadowy chambers of the night
The silences abide

Of my dear dead, but close, in still delight
Forever at my side ;

And in the windy April sun

They move apace, they run

Urgent and urging, near me now, behind me,
Ahead of me, inviting, leading, guiding,

Beckoning to me — here — now here — now
there—

Recalling me, retelling, every chiding

My heart to old remembrance, to remind me

How once they too loved laughter of the wave,

Hushed waters, winding bays, cool morning
beaches,

Blue herons on the wing, far sails that fade,

Sweet piney odors under amber shade,

Untrodden grass,

The dewy air

Of leafy orchards . . . is it a wild-rose reaches

SILENCES

To catch now at me as I pass?
As if some hand had touched, some voice had
 said,
“See—no—we are not dead,
We are not in the lone cold grave,
Nor in the shadowy chambers of the night
To fret you with reproaches or affright,
But all the daylong through,
In sun, in light,
In love, in prayer,
Forever at your side.”

PROUD FARMER

PROUD farmer, proud of your new red barn,
With its shining roof and its trollied door,
And its huge home-painted sign, proclaiming
“John Stevenson, Stock Farm,” and the date—
O yes, the date!—we laughed at you—
You’d never know—and called you dub
For the stupid blunder you had made,
You and your clumsy painting-brush,
Laughed as we whirled at sixty per
In our high speed car—“John Stevenson,
Stock Farm, 1977”—
Seventy-seven for seventeen!
“An artist, that farmer! Seventy-seven—
Where’ll he be in seventy-seven,
Where’ll he be in sixty years!
Nineteen Seventy-seven—ho,”
We shouted at you as we flew by,
“Hey, you farmer! Hey, you artist!”

And the ribboning road sped under us,
Around the hill and through the woods

PROUD FARMER

And into the open again, and past
The country graveyard—stone by stone,
Stone by stone with their graven dates. . .

Nineteen Seventy-seven . . . well?

NOT IN THE SPOKEN WORD

NOT in the spoken word,
Nor in the open glance,
But in the thought inferred,
The shy look, half askance,
Love speaks its best. So I,
I too, with shyness turn
From what I love away,
And in mute silence burn
To look, to speak, to say . . .
Love is not bold, but shy.

NOVEMBER VIGILS

I. THE RIVER

MY heart keeps vigil by the grave;
And though I walk down pleasure's way,
While others laugh, a moonlit wave,
A sorrowing voice far, far away,
Is all I hear, is all I crave.

Under the oaks she lies asleep:
I never hear a bird-voice now,
Sweet in the rustling leaves, but weep,
Remembering my love, my vow,
My dear one buried by the deep.

O River, well she loved you when
In Springtime by your stream we strayed.
She knew the course—the path—the glen,
She crossed your torrents unafraid;—
She never, never comes again.

Now your low voice along the weir
May lift its oldtime chant to charm,

NOVEMBER VIGILS

Or on the upper rocks shout clear,
Leaping the cataract in alarm:
Or sing or shout, she does not hear.

Or when again the Maytime breaks,
And all your banks are buried fair
In flowery vine and bloom that shakes
Above your foamy waters there,
And earth of Heaven a while partakes—

Or when November's sullen tone
Speaks in your murmuring voice, or cries
Where deeper waters roll, and stone
And cliff gleam wet 'neath darkening skies,
And mournful rain makes heavy moan:

Nay, come what mood of wind or sky,
Or Autumn's tears, or smile of Spring,
She will not know nor hear the cry
Of grieving and regret I bring.
Only the wind will hear my sigh—

She will not know, she cannot see.
Unheeded as the fallen leaf
I'll stand beneath the strippen tree,
Alone with memory and grief—
She will not hear nor answer me. . .

NOVEMBER VIGILS

II. THE SEA

Wildly the wind-torn mists at dawn
Break from the barren hill,
And the wind is bleak and chill
And scatters the leaves on the lawn.

Deep from the deep the summons came ;
And the white flower by the shore
Yieldingly bent before
The wind and the call of her name.

And "Death, and the year is dead !" we cry ;
"Death, and our hearts are dead !
Nothing is left to be said.
There is no light in the sky."

"O look, who in sorrow forget the sea !
For the stream can never end
Till its waters meet and blend
With the deep that hath called for me.

"O hear, for afar on the tide along
Sings the effulgent surge ;
And the moan and disconsolate dirge
Of night is changed to a song !"

NOVEMBER VIGILS

Over the wind and the waters, clear,
A living voice: "The grave
Is only a darkling wave
Of the deep that swept me here;

"The grave is only the lillied gate
That opes to a garden fair;
And you on the roadway there
Must still yet a little wait."

. . . Wildly the wind-torn mists uplift,
Wild breaks the barren day;
But over the hills, away
Toward the sea, there is light in the rift.

III. THE GRAVE

November whispers death, they say;
And on the wind a voice of grief;
And in the rustling of a leaf
The symbol of the ended day.

The sun is silver now, they cry,
And all its golden warmth is fled:
The chill of dying things or dead
Is on the air and in the sky.

NOVEMBER VIGILS

And where but yesterday we strolled
By tuneful stream and flowery field,
Now all the watercourse is sealed,
The blossoms rotting in the mould.

And so have come the lonely years
Upon me, stealing without warning:
A golden eve—a silver morning—
And where the dew was, only tears.

Yet O November of the skies
Of sapphire light and silver air,
I love you still! I make a prayer
Of joy to you—not tears, not sighs—

But song!—because, whate'er the flame
Of starry frost your blue nights bring,
Or withered green, or vanished wing,
Life still to me remains the same—

Deathless and beautiful, though I
Mark it and measure it alone
Beside a grave-mound's fallen stone;
Beautiful, deathless, fair and high!

For now, because the air is clearer,
Swept by November's windy broom,

NOVEMBER VIGILS

I see beyond the leaf-strewn tomb
Horizons that bring Heaven nearer;

And in the rustling of a leaf
That trembles on the sunken mound
The echo of a voice—a sound
Of other things than tears and grief

IV. ALL SOULS

Wild wind of the wild November night,
Wild leaves that fly,
Wild turning sky,
Wild heaven of a hollow light,
Wild echo of a sigh—

O, in my heart I hear you, hear you, and in
my soul reply—

Not in your breath is death, November,
But pulse of life in the fading ember;
Fire of desire in the weakening frame
That yet shall blossom to starry flame;
Voice of the deathless, far and high,
Imperishable endless cry—

I shall not die!

I shall not die!

I shall not die!

YOU

YOU!

You coming toward me!

Smile of the smiling eyes,

Young head that tosses the world away,

Young body breasting the tides of day,

Swift feet that run, strong hands that reach
to clasp

And steady all my being in their grasp,

Warm ringing voice that cries my name in run-
ning,

You—

You coming toward me!

You—

You going from me.

Young feet that lag a little, yet cannot stay,

Young eyes that see horizons past my day,

Young heart that fronts the world, that breasts
the tide,

Young voice now silent that had gladly cried

My name in running to me—voice that dies,

Young hands that droop, nor any longer clasp

My being in their grasp.

You going from me! . . .

ALOHA!

(On a hill just outside the old Spanish-Californian town of Monterey, once the familiar haunt of R. L. S. and his friend "Charlie" Stoddard, the grave of Stoddard, "the Poet of the South Seas," lies under the cypress trees, within sound of the Pacific.)

I KEEP my vigil by the dawnlit wave:

From the lone cypress and the lonely
grave

I turn me to the old familiar way

We walked together in a bygone day—

Down the white sands we go. How softly fall
Our footsteps on the morning's shadowy pall!
The quiet of the night still hovers o'er
The breathing deep and the dim whispering
shore.

A boat swings idly on the tide; a net
Stirs in the wind, salty and sparkling wet.
The gulls are preening where the rocks are
high;
They fill the harbor with their querulous
cry. . .

ALOHA!

Now the breeze freshens! Up the cool brown
sands

The seaweed, woven by the magic hands
Of moving waters into garlands, slides,
Murmurous of secret fathoms, hidden tides,
Unsundered waters . . .

“Other tides! So came
Dawn on the white Levantine shore—the flame
Of sunrise burning the dark architrave
Of orient heaven;—see how the farthest wave
Leaps with the light!—till from the enkindling
sun

Swift seas of fiery circlets blaze and run
Along the bright horizon!”

(O, the far,
The bright horizons, past the golden bar
This sunrise kindles!) Speak, O voice of love,
Voice of my heart, speak on!

“Below, above,
Light, life, and beauty! So did dawn awake
When Egypt called me; so did morning break
A thousand times across the Tahitian sand”. . .

ALOHA!

(O voice of loneliness! O loving hand,
Reach to me—here I am—to clasp you, hold
you;
Heart of my heart, in dreams I still enfold
you!)

“Mark how the wave grows warm”. . .

Warm is the wave
Tumbling afar, past cypressd hill and
grave—

No longer now in the cool temperate glow
Of western worlds we walk; this languorous
flow

Of waking waters, warmed by sultry night,
Sings only of green isles of soft delight,
Where tranquil sea and deep untroubled sky
Kiss in the dawn, woo when the noon is high,
In the warm dusk conceive—and starry sown
Bring forth o’ dark the visions gods have
known!

“So on Tahiti’s sands”. . .

How blue, how calm,
That tide beneath its solitary palm—
Moving, and still; stirring, and hushed once
more;

ALOHA!

Sleeping at last along the sleeping shore.
The wind is born to die before it breathes;—
What magic fingers move the drifting wreaths
Of seaweed down the shining sands again?
What voice of love, what secret, whispered then
Out of the drowsing deep?. . . Beloved, stay!
Leave me not now! Look, how the sunbright
day

Opens to greet you! Hark, how the silence
shakes—

A shout—a laugh—and all the wave awakes
And trembles, quickened by a thrill of joy—
The swimmer's plunge!—the laughter of a
boy!—

The bronze-limbed body poised—the glittering
leap—

The cleaving of the clear and solid deep,
Till all the tide is dancing in the track
Of thrusting arm, of streaming curving back:
Beauty of body, nimble-limbed and lithe,
Sweep of an arm that reaps with youth's swift
scythe

A world of lusty joy, of radiant pleasure
With every long propulsion, every measure
Of rhythmic stroke and darting stride!—gay
mouth

ALOHA!

That tosses music on the tide!—the south
Is warm upon those warm red lips, and warm
The light that plays upon that gleaming
form—

Shoulders of shimmering beauty, strong full
throat,

Rippling the waters' every golden mote
To little maddened cadences of light. . .

Nay, go not from me, nor so soon take flight,
Dear spirit of my friend. Beside me stay
And let me dream the past with you today.
And you shall tell me too what shelters know
Your fond sojourning now: what waters glow
Along the shores you muse by: what wide
nights

Bloom with great stars above you: what
delights

Breathe on the slumberous wind, or laughing
break

Where the white rainbowed cataracts awake
The ancient silences. What naked boy,
Vine-leafed and laughing, hailing you with joy,
Leaps at your coming now, running to meet
you?

What says good Brother Anthony to greet you?

ALOHA!

Do the sweet larks of Shottery arise
Signalling to you from their English skies
With Heavenly music? Does the Mission Bell
Still chiming on the wind sing "*Gabriel*"
Along the Royal Highroad? As of old,
Love, let me share your dreams, your
visions. . .

Cold,
Cold is the wind against me, and the chill
Of night breathes strangely from the noon-
bright hill. . .

What touch of death is on me, of the grave,
Where the lone cypress beckons me from the
wave?. . .

O SINGERS DEAR!

O, THAT that miracle might come again
Whereby the gravecloths of my soul,
unsealed,
Would fall away, and I, a living thing,
Would rise and sing once more!

Silence is on me; seals my singing lips,
That once caught fire of prophecy from Life;
Silence is on me, silence on my heart
That once beat bold and quick and bolder
spoke;
Silence, and shadow on my seeing eyes,
So still, so wide and dark
Breathes the hushed air in which my soul
abides. . .

Far off I hear the song of life; there is
An echoing beauty in its murmured strain:
Far off I hear the music and the beat
Of marching millions; and there stirs, like
birth,
A little movement in my inmost being,

O SINGERS DEAR!

A little cry that cries that it be heard—
Yet dies unuttered; and afar the song,
The music and the marching fall away,
And the dread wakeful silence breaks again
Its soundless waves upon my muted soul,
The while I know that other hearts there are
That both may hear and answer; other souls
That catch some echo of the great refrain,
And all attuned with the infinite
Add their sweet chording to the weaving choral
Chanting to God the endless song of life. . . .
But I—but I must silent be, and go
My lonely way, with hunger in my heart,
With only yearning and again the hunger
To feed upon. —Hath He appointed then,
That this soul sing—and this soul silent be,
And this blade bloom in flowering loveliness
And this a barren weed? . . .

O singers dear,
O happy hearted whom it so is given
To hear the song and sing it back again,
Ever with new and infinite varinote,
O poets, pity one who once hath sung
But now is stricken down with death of
silence. . .

EPITAPH

BRING me no tears where I am lying. If
you love me.

Bring me a song. Hear how the birds sing high
above me!

POSSESSION

NEVER a word through all the years
 Never a word or sign!

What has your life been—gray with tears
 Like mine?

Have you, through all the lonely day
 Looked to the night for boon,
Only to rise in the dark and pray
 For noon?

Or, have you run a merry pace,
 Music and song and play,
Putting the thought of one sad face
 Forever away?

Who has possessed your heart?—who held
 Your willing soul in thrall?
Whose have you been—ay, ringed and belled,
 Body and all?

Never a word through all the years—
 Never a sign!
But O, you have been, in prayers, in tears,
 Mine, mine, mine!

MY NIGHTINGALE

HOW pure, how golden, from the dark-
ened grove,
That eve when grieving weighed me heavily
down,
Broke the clear lyric of the nightingale!

In song and fable often had I heard
Far echoes of that rich and lovely note,
Sung by the poets in their ecstasy;

But never had its dreamlike music come
To greet my ear until that weary night
I walked alone, when sorrow weighed me down—

Alone—alone upon an alien shore—
Only a grave was there to comfort me;
And from it grievingly I turned away—

And from the sea I turned—too full of tears,
Too full of tears unwept, my burdened heart
To bear the sadness of that moving tide.

MY NIGHTINGALE

A little wind stirred in the whispering palms ;
A star came out to bathe its loveliness
In the dark wave ; the night breathed quietly—

Untroubled breathed the night ; but O, my heart
Was sorrowful, my spirit full of grief,
Grief for a broken dream, a vanished hope.

Alone upon an alien shore, whose tide
Brought me no peace ; the calm and starlit
 night
Gave me no peace. And then that music
 came—

That dreamed-of music ! Lark of eventide,
Whose lovely song is never lost in heaven,
But pours its sweetness out for earthly
 hearts—

My nightingale ! Bird of the darkened hour,
Singing when shadows gather heavily down,
Singing of hope when hope seems gone for-
 ever !—

Sweet voice of cheer, sweet voice of gentle balm,
Sweet bird of sorrow !—never seen, but O
Remembered ever, singing in my heart !

Back Home

Far off thou art, yet ever nigh:
I have thee still and I rejoice:
I prosper, circled with thy voice:
I cannot lose thee tho' I die!

—TENNYSON.

WILLOW RIVER

R O M E I have loved and by the Tiber's
stream

Dreamed once again the poet's classic dream
Where living spires above dead splendors gleam.

Firenze under the white Appenine snows
Holds still my heart as long as Arno flows
Deep swelling with the tide of Dante's woes.

Seine of the bridges, that from towered Rouen
Links the dear glory of the martyred Jeanne
With boulevarded Paris in its span—

Vienna of St. Stephen's . . . music, light,
And the blue Danube, swift in silver flight,
Whispering dark secrets to the singing night.

Vistula, that I've followed from the falls
Of ice-fed Tatra, past old Krakow's walls,
Through Poland's sunlit fields where Baltic
calls—

WILLOW RIVER

And Holy Kiev of the golden domes
Where still down Lavra's darkened catacombs
Grave Nestor's spirit by the Dnieper roams:

But O great Tiber, Arno dear, O Seine,
O, dreaming Danube, and wide-watered plain
Of Polish prairie and the flowered Ukraine,

Not all your storied streams nor all your flood
Of fabled wave—though stars of glory stud
Your heroed bosoms—stir my homing blood

As one fond vagrant glimpse of this least tide,
Unmapped, uncharted, hidden from the pride
Of traveled scene, whose quiet waters glide

Deep in the timbered prairie, where a day
Of long lost summertime, a boy at play,
I dreamed great worlds and rivers far away.

MY MOTHER'S BEADS

MY mother's beads! Oh, how I treasure
This little chain, more than its measure
Leagues long a thousand times in gold,
For the dear prayers that she has told,
Many and many an hour of old,
Remembering and loving me
With thoughts as sweet as roses
That hold me and unfold.

Now she has put her prayers away,
And all the cares of the long tired day,
And fast asleep,
Clasped in night's sweet surcease,
At peace, at rest, reposes;
But I upon my wayward way
My late and lonely vigil keep,
And by the fading firelight linger
To hold, to press, to fondly finger
Her dear old worn white rosary—
My mother's blesséd beads!

MY MOTHER'S BEADS

My mother's beads—my mother's tears,
Her hopes, her fears,
Her prayers for me!
I kiss thee, jewel, dear to me
As if her tears through all the years,
The draught of pain
That mothers drink
From Life's unfathomable cup,
Came welling up,
And drop on drop, and link on link,
Forged this dear chain,
This rosary
Of love and prayer and care for me.
How God must hearken when a mother pleads,
And Heaven hush all its harps and lifted voices
To listen to her counting out her beads!
So on this little chain
Nightly she tells her needs,
Turning to holy mysteries—
To Bethlehem, to Calvary,
To Resurrection's riven tomb—
Conning the old sweet sacred story,
Unearthly gladness, pain-pierced glory,
Of mother-love and love divine,
For strength to bear her pain,
For strength to suffer mine!

MY MOTHER'S BEADS

How often has she followed Him
Into the shadow of the olive trees,
Where, in the darkness, crosses dim
Uprose from out the fearful gloom
To clasp her pitiless in their arms!
How often has she gone alone
Into the blackness of Gethsemane
To drink the bitter cup for me!

O little beads, a lifetime spent
In counting you could only say,
The old old truth—a mother's choice is
To watch and pray
And be content.

Heaven, I ask no greater gain
In life than to repay
The debt this little chaplet holds
Against me night and day;
So would I pray—
Let me be now the strong one who enfolds
The dear one, safe from trouble and alarms;
Let every day bring her the fruitage rare
Of all these mysteries,
Sorrowful, glorious,
Joyful,—victorious!

MY MOTHER'S BEADS

This, Jesus, is the prayer
That I would tell tonight
On this old precious rosary, so dear, so worn,
so white!

And thou, O Mother of Mothers, in whose eyes
The shadow of all mother sorrow lies
Across the light of infinite happiness
Thy motherhood divine hath given thee—
Mother of Christ, pray Thy dear Son to bless
My mother who on these dear beads for me
So many a loving prayer hath prayed to thee!

O little chain, so dear to her,
Tonight you hold me prisoner.

PRESENCES

A WOMAN by a western window sitting,
The light of sunset on her bended
head . . .

O, never never tell me She is dead!—
I see her kind hands busy with their knitting,
Cool leafy shadow o'er them softly flitting,
Mottling the sunny carpet's faded red;
I hear her low voice say, as oft she said,
(Immortal word from lips immortal fitting!)—

“But no one dies, nor in this life or other.
I know. Why, there are presences abiding
Close to me always. My father and my mother
Are near me often, smiling, even chiding,
And saying plainly over and over to me,
‘But no one dies’ . . . It's true. . . You wait
and see!”

THE SILVER MAPLE

(For Frances Mulrooney)

I REMEMBER the silver maple. I never
can forget it!
It grew on the sunset side of the old white house.
It grows there still—
I remember the first time I saw it, and I but a
boy—
Thrilled with the first sight of it, hurt quickly
in a way I could not understand, by the
beauty of it—
So touched, so hurt, that I never, never could
forget!
A queer lad, surely, to have been noticing such
things in such a way,
And remembering them—
How the young tree seemed to tremble in the
breeze,
And be shaken and turn pale in the wind,
Showing the silver underside of its leaves
As if the breath of a swoon were passing
through it and over it.

THE SILVER MAPLE

Mostly when a storm was brewing,
And all the West grew thunderous black,
And the hush before rainfall made the air stand
very still—

Mostly then did it seem alive, that tremulous
silver maple,

So timid, so young, so slender,

Such a lovely sapling,

So unused to the rough fingers of the wind,

So afraid of the darkness of clouds in the West,
or the whisper of storm on the wind—

And always so full of bright wonder at the
caress and music of the new April air—

So young, so virginal, so beautiful!

But it was beautiful in the sunlight, too—

O, doubly beautiful in the sunlight!

On still mornings, when the dew was yet on the
grass,

Or in the quiet evening,

It seemed to leap in the light like a silver foun-
tain playing,

Whose waters rose irradiant in the air,

Yet never fell save to vanish on the wind

In veils of green invisible mist;

THE SILVER MAPLE

Or in the windy sunlight of bright Summer
afternoons—

How all its being seemed to vibrate then with
inner beauty, inner light,

Flashing to its tips

As music and emotion flash and glow

Through young human bodies halted in their
running,

Naked and laughing in the morning light!

I never forgot that tree,

Though years and distances and many wan-
derings

Swept me further from its ken

Than ever the wildest of its own leaves travelled,
caught on the roving wind;

No, though I went far,

I never, never forgot.

And then, one day, after many years had
passed,

Long years away from home and all its familiar
sights,

I returned to the old town, to the old house.

O, I cannot forget that day!

For, as I passed up the street,

THE SILVER MAPLE

The drowsing village street, with its wild, tall
 grass like a meadow,
Its paths and its flowery gardens,
Marking how strangely, how uncannily un-
 changed seemed everything, look where
 I might,
As if life had stood still there through all the
 passing years—
Suddenly I beheld the silver maple tree!
The silver maple—the tree of my memory—
 the sapling—the leafy fountain!—
A great gray-boled giant, topping the roofs,
Whose friendly shadow used to lean out in the
 morning to shelter it;
A great knotty tree rising over the eaves,
Reaching gnarled arms above the old white
 house,
As if it would shield it from the stormy West,
Giving to its windows, for the darkness of
 clouds, the soft light of its thousand
 silver breasts,
And for the sound of storm on the wind, or the
 sorry voice of rain,
The music of its tuneful leaves.
The silver maple!—the sapling gone—my tree
 grown great, grown gray, grown old—

THE SILVER MAPLE

Yet beautiful, beautiful still, in the wind and
sun;
Mighty and more beautiful than ever I had re-
membered it:
Beautiful, mirroring the soul of every passing
air,
Arching the generations of the old white house,
Faithful and beautiful, lifting its million
hands, its arms, its body, its whole being
To God, to Heaven, to the skies, the stars;
Enduring storms, and in wind and weather
growing mighty,
And from the very tempests that harassed it,
wresting its strength;
And for the sunlight of bright days and the
still peace of moonlit midnights
Giving back light and laughter, or the pure joy
of trysting shadows—
The silver maple, grown great, grown old, in
its appointed place,
Beautiful and faithful,
My silver maple!
And “O, the silver maple!”
Involuntarily I cried out—
“I remember when that tree was young;

THE SILVER MAPLE

I remember the day it was planted, a tender
sapling trembling in my father's hands;
I remember. . . ”

Then suddenly the sunlight seemed to darken
down the roofs,
And a shadow passed over the quiet street
And over the tall quiet tree,
The silver of its leaves suddenly flashing before
me like a wave of light,
Like light from some unseen height, some far
off inaccessible hilltop;
A shadow and a wind,
A wind that stirred the tree to its innermost
secret leaf,
Yet left the hushed grass at its root untouched,
unstirred;
A wind whose swift invisible fingers swept
through my being
Making a vast clamor in my heart,
Waking a thousand sleeping echoes in my
soul . . .

And then I looked upon myself
To see what the years had done to me.

LOST LITTLE BOY

O LITTLE boy, how pure you are, how fair!
And what a wonder in your big gray eyes,
Like to the heavens when sweet suns surprise
The silver rains. I see you laughing there,
Light-heart, so far away! Through clouds of
care,
Undimmed the April morning of your skies
Smiles back to me, where night and lonely
cries
Fill my dark going that you cannot share.

Lost little boy, come back to me again!
Bring me the dear companions of your day,
Bring me your loves, your dreams, your
young delight.
Lost little boy, O let me be again
The lad you were! See how I kneel and pray
And fold my tired hands, like you to-
night.

HOLIDAY

I WOULD that I could find
In the bright Christmas frost
That gift more dear than gold refined—
The friends that I have lost!

Now all the bells ring out,
Now voices rise in song;
Care scampers at the merry rout,
Forgot are grief and wrong.

The hollyberry gleams,
The candles dance and glow,
And lighthearts run with happy dreams
Across the sparkling snow.

Life blows a rosy cheek!
Life laughs through starry frost! . . .
But where I kneel, still, still I seek
The friends that I have lost.

Sanctuary

When you have shut your doors, and darkened your room, remember never to say that you are alone, for you are not alone . . . God is within.

—EPICTETUS.

EUCHARIST

I WILL have this Sacrament—
Eucharist of raying light,
Particle on particle,
One to all and all to one,
Hidden flower or skyey pine,
All to one and one to all;
Even so, the blade, the weed,
Feeding on the Entire Sun,
One to all and all to one.

I will have this Sacrament . . .
One to all and all to one.

HOLY ORDERS

I. THE FINDING OF THE GRAIL

SWEET on the morning air the music breaks,
And clear the voices lifted up in song,
Commingled all in harmony—a throng
Of angels for the joy their choral makes.
Soft glow the lights, or—when the May wind
shakes
The lillies—leap in worshipping tongues along
The lake-like marble. Now the solemn gong
Speaks—and my heart is stilled, my soul par-
takes
Of glory all so sudden and profound
My senses fail me. . . In the lovely light
That beams upon his countenance, behold
The radiance that led the knights of old
When worshipful they sought through all the
night
The Blessed Grail. Lo, now the Cup is found!

II. THE WORD

Amid the altar lillies, crimson-rayed
He stands, the sacred one; and Heaven is bowed

HOLY ORDERS

In adoration when his hands are laid
Upon the Symbol, and the Word avowed.
What throng is this angelic that I see
Crowding about him in bright ecstasy?
Lo, all the hosts eternal greet him, proud,
And with celestial clamor sweet and loud
Proclaim him priest anoint! . . . Old Simeon,
Fair Samuel, and all the young Levites
Of eld; hoar prophets; raptured neophytes,
Ushered by angels choiring antiphon
And hymn exultant; all high Heaven released
To sing laudate to the new-made priest!

III. THE BLESSING

O beautiful, O blessed hands to kiss!
O happy I to bear upon my head
So dear a benediction! Angels led
Me surely smiling here to share in this
Gladdest and holiest of hours! Abyss
Of pinnacled delight!—my soul is fed
With Heavenly food, the Heart Divine that
bled

For me is opened now. I weep, remiss
In all that's good; yet, love-emboldened, see—
I lift mine eyes, and through my happy tears

HOLY ORDERS

Lo, I behold not you, but Him! I hear
A voice speak blessings on me lovingly. . .
O blessed hands, lead me through all the years!
O holy voice, speak ever to mine ear!

IV. CORPUS CHRISTI

Encanopied with light, within a cloud
Of beauty-breathing incense, and with song
Ringing the candle-flaming aisles along,
Upheralded—young voices high and proud
Announcing Him, parting the kneeling crowd—
He comes, He comes! Sound, cymbal! Chime
sweet gong!

Echo, O treble bells! Roll, organ, strong
With lusty voice of praising lifted loud. . .
Yet not in jewelled glory, aureoled
In snowy monstrance, cleaving high and bright
The music-shaken air 'neath vaulted skies,
Do I my King and Master now behold,
But in the radiance of your brow alight,
And in the rapture of your visioning eyes.

V. THE NAME

Yes, friend I called him, and in loving pride
Still do I claim him so; and brother too;

HOLY ORDERS

But God has given him, ever to abide,
A dearer higher title, holier, true,
More beautiful: the noblest name that man
Ever may bear in all time's widest span:
Father! O what fulfillment, dear and great
Breathes in that blessed title consecrate!
Guardian and Keeper of the soul: high name
Sung through all Heaven to the Godhead's
fame;
Gentle and loving title, whispered low
While Mary slept by Bethlehem's drifted snow;
Father! Guide, counselor and friend, but best,
FATHER, man's highest title, Heavenly blest.

VI. ORA PRO ME

Friend whom I've loved (friend yet I dare to
name
Him whom in awful beauty we behold
Clothed in the raiment of the heavenly fold)—
Friend whom I love, keep in your heart my
claim,
And in your memory, beyond all blame,
My need of you: so, when that bell is tolled
Which marks my passing to the graveyard cold,
Or be I near you or afar, the same:

HOLY ORDERS

Lift up your voice again to Him Who gives
This dear and awful power to you, and cry
With all your soul's pure strength my name,
that I

May hearken to you "knowing that He
lives"! . . .

Ah, gaining God's best gift beyond the grave,
I will remember then the boon you gave!

PRELUDE IN A DAISY FIELD

UNDER the blue bright chancel of the sky
Before the golden monstrance of the sun,
White surpliced choristers stand file on file—

Ready . . . ready. . .

Little uplifted faces . . . ready . . .

ready . . .

Waiting and all atremble. . .

Ready . . . ready. . .

SIX SONGS AT BETHLEHEM

I. ROAD SONG

THE shepherds had an angel's song
An angel's radiant light
To guide them the dark hills along
Through Bethlehem's holy night.

The Magi had a mighty star
Spanning the skies with fire
To lead them from the East afar
To find their heart's desire.

So I in light and song rejoice,
So I my guide am given—
Light of your loving eye, your voice
Sweet with the sound of Heaven!

II. GOOD TIDINGS

We have our flocks to tend,
Night watch to keep:

SIX SONGS AT BETHLEHEM

Darkly the heavens bend,
Weary the shepherds sleep,
Lost seems the way, the end
Unfathomed deep.

“Good tidings of great joy we bring!”
The angels cry—
And rosy is the world with light,
And golden is the sky!

O angel voices, still you sing
From Heaven on high,
And you are near us in the night
When evil passes by!

III. THE CRIB

How warm, how bright, O babe divine,
Thy crib before the altar lies—
Yet cold and bleak a bed was thine
’Neath Bethlehem’s wintry skies.

So was my heart, bleak, cold and drear,
A sorry place of woe and sin
Until—the angels singing near—
You entered soft within!

SIX SONGS AT BETHLEHEM

IV. LOVE-LADEN

Love-laden, as the shepherds come,
Each with his gift, a little lamb,
Lord let me come, my offering
All that I have, all that I am.

Love-laden as the shepherds go
Into the shadowed night awhile,
Lord, let me go, my soul new born
By the sweet grace of Bethlehem's smile.

V. MY GIFT

I would I were the little lamb
The wondering shepherds bore
To Bethlehem's lowly crib, a gift
From out their meagre store.

I would I were the ox so calm
Breathing his sweet warm breath
Upon the Little Baby there
Who softly slumbereth.

I would I were the beasties good,
The stable or the stall—
But I can only be myself
And give my heart, my all.

SIX SONGS AT BETHLEHEM

VI. THE WOODS ARE STILL WITH MYSTERY

The woods are still with mystery,
The fields are white with purity,
And over all a quiet lies,
Peace and the hush of brooding skies.

These are the gifts the dumb earth brings,
Tribute of elemental things,
Peace in the woods, the holy glow
Of peace on widening fields of snow.

REED IN THE WIND

REED in the wind, reed in the wind,
There is a kingly air to you!

Is it—is it that you remember?
—Down in the dark and sewered ways,
Old Jerusalem, do you remember?
Dirt and filth, and a whipping post;
Gyves and a torture-weakened body
Bleeding from stripes and ropes and staves;
Beautiful pallid young man's body,
Beautiful face gone gray with pain,
Brow and temples crimson laced,
Brow and temples brave with light!
Eyes that cloud with mortal pain,
Eyes that ensphere the spheres with light—
Eyes that melt with love denied.
Do you remember?. . . Do you remember,
Reed in the wind, reed in the wind,
A hand that even in binding thongs
Moved with a godlike gesture, powered
To turn the high withholding stars
Or check the floodgates of the sky—

REED IN THE WIND

Kingly palm that opens now
Grasping a reed from the river's brink—

Do you remember, reed in the wind? . . .
There is a kingly air to you!

THE CROSS

SYMBOL of ignominy, sign of shame,
Once none could name you but black death
to name.

Gibbet and scaffold both, in dark affright
Loomed your dread portent 'gainst the sorry
night.

Dogs bayed upon you; men with veiled eyes
Passed you to spit upon you, crying cries

And cursing curses. . . . So, amid the din
Of man and beast afraid, gaunt tree of sin,

Through darkened ages, harbinger of crime
You stood—until befell that radiant time

One walked beneath you free of earthly stain,
Who came, All-Innocent, to hang in pain

Upon your blackened length, to wet your wood
With the bright crimson of His holy blood. . .

THE CROSS

O barren tree, how flowery bloomed you then,
Shining before the tear dimmed eyes of men

Incarnadined in heavenly loveliness!—
Great branches stretching out to shield, to
 bless;

Great arms uplifted, and still lifting up
Love's chalice'd fruitage for all men to sup!

So now, no longer black with dread, nor stark
With nothingness, but in the deepest dark

Ruddy with gladsome light O Cross you rise,
Bright rainbow of the universal skies!

THE GARDEN

HERE where the winter's blight too long has
lain,

And barren frost the only flower to bloom,

Now sudden sweeps the sweet ablution rain;
Now, through the veiling tears we see the
Tomb—

A tomb no longer, but a gateway bright

That smiling opens to a garden fair,
Whereunto, beckoning our souls from night,
The Master passes on a breath of prayer.

Theatre

. . . A worthier stage the soul itself,
Its shifting fancies and celestial lights,
With all its grand orchestral silences
To keep the pauses of its rhythmic sounds.

—BROWNING.

FOUR GREEK TRAGEDIES

(For Margaret Anglin.)

I. ANTIGONE

CLEAR on the moonlit Californian air
A voice from out the deathless ages
breaks—

Brave with the courage of a god, and fair,
Antigone the true, the tender, wakes!—
O hero-days renewed, that we behold
One of the bright immortals live again,
Pouring her pure high passion in the mold
Of breathing art, to melt the hearts of men!
Ah mournful eyes! Ah silver voice, that shakes
The night with tragic sorrow, sing anew
The glorious womanhood thy soul partakes,
The virgin love, the faith forever true!
Beauty and power are thine, and noble zeal,
Lady of mighty dreams, to crown thy high
ideal!

FOUR GREEK TRAGEDIES

II. ELECTRA

Wake not my dream—leave me my dear
belief—

The lithe bronzed torch-boys with their kindled
flame

Caught from the selfsame stars that softly
came

To gaze on Argos and the maiden's grief:
The sacrificial altar, horn and sheaf,
The crimson Mother—she whose very name
The virgin daughter in avenging shame
Breathes loathingly, to cry for Heaven's re-
lief . . .

How like a wounded bird that beats its wings
Against the crowding fates, with tender wail
Telling in cadenced sorrow all her woes
To the deaf heavens, proud Electra goes.
Then sudden—till the shaken stars grow pale—
Up through the night her cry of triumph rings!

III. IPHEGENIA IN AULIS

O godlike gesture whose compelling sweep
Bids buried glories and the golden lore
Of days long lost live all their beauty o'er—
How like a sickle doth thy white arm reap

FOUR GREEK TRAGEDIES

Its sheaf of sorrows! Ah, thou dost not weep
Alone, sweet Iphegenia, nor implore
Alone the sterile heavens o'er Aulis shore
To blow a breath of saving on the deep!
Daughter of sacrifice, thy tender grace,
Thy tragic story tremulous with tears,
Is more than legend now—thy lovely face
Shines like a living star through all the night;
Thy voice hath touched anew the vanished
 years,
Kindling Time's ancient silences with light!

IV. MEDEA

O desolated love! O bitter cry
Far echoing o'er the clamorous tide of years,
Drowning the silence of the dead with tears—
Dark is thy warning, dread thy wailing sigh,
O angry voice that will not, will not die!
Ruthless thy challenge to the unwilling ears
Of foolish men! Woe, woe to him who veers
From love's true course; or veering, seeks to
 buy
Peace from a wrongéd woman. She, create
To gladden all the earth with love's sweet song,

FOUR GREEK TRAGEDIES

Outfuries hell with her envenomed hate
If in her wedlocked right she suffer wrong!
Woe, woe to him, and better never born—
For him not words nor tears, but blood, must
mourn!

SISTER GIOVANNA

(For Lillian Gish in Marion Crawford's "White Sister.")

FLOWER of dew and dawning spun,
 Lily dancing in the light,
Lily laughing in the sun:

Little wistful smiling mouth,
 Eyes of April-azure skies,
Fresh with sunshine of the south:

Flower of grieving kissed by dew
 With the bravery of love
Storm and shadow smiling through:

Lily beaten in the rain,
 Woeful little face of tears,
Woeful little smile of pain:

Touch of tremulous finger tips,
 Rosary of tears unwept,
Smothered on unspeaking lips:

Lily smitten by the gale,
 Lily torn by wind and flood,
Lily whipped by passion's hail:

Lily rooted in the sod,
 Lily broken in the sun,
Lily smiling up to God.

Soldiers

Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.

—RUPERT BROOKE.

THE CRIMSON SNOW

(Christmas, 1914.)

“CLOSE to your heart, O take Me, Mother,
Close to your bosom hold,
There are cries in the night that shake Me,
Mother,
And the wind of the world is cold!”

*Sweet, O be quiet; safe in my keeping
Nothing shall hurt or harm.
(’Tis only the throb of my wild heart weeping—
The pulse of my loving arm.)*

“But the wind is bitter and chill, My Mother,
And the world is turning dark,
And the voice of Love is still, My Mother,
While the Wolves of Anger bark!

“And where is the light of My Star, O Mother,
That was so wont to glow,
Beckoning far and far, O Mother,
Over the Christmas snow?

THE CRIMSON SNOW

“Will the Shepherds come no more, My Mother,
Nor hear when the Angel sings?”

*They come no more! They have lost one another,
And they quarrel with the ancient Kings.*

“And the Kings?—they bring no more love-
treasures;

Nor magi nor paladin—”
*They have gone them down, for hates and pleasures,
Into the Valley of Sin!*

“O, cry to the Kings then, Mother My Mother,
And call to the Shepherds dear!
Tell them I love them, brother and brother,
Plowman or prince or seer—

“Call to them sweet and loud, O Mother!
Cry, ere the Star be lost—
For a terrible dark cloud, O Mother,
Breathes through the Christmas frost,

“A cloud that is deathly mortal, Mother—”
(*'Tis smoke from the gates of hell!*)
“But who hath opened that portal, Mother?”
Ah, who? And who will tell?

THE CRIMSON SNOW

“And look, O Mother, My Mother, look!—

There is blood on the Christmas snow,
And blood on the sea, of brother and brother,
And blood where the rivers flow.

“And O, the grief on the wind and storm,
And O, the cries of pain!

And whiter than snow, the stark white form
Of brother by brother slain!

“Mother, My Mother, lift Me high

Ere the sun in the dawn hath swooned,
And show Me to my brother's eye
Ere he die of his gaping wound!

“Higher—and high, O Mother, hold!

And cry to the world of men,
Till Shepherd and King and Seer, as of Old,
Come back to my Crib again!”

THE GHOST

*How goes the night?
How fares the fight,
 Brother across the sea?
How holds the line
That's yours and mine,
 Warder of Liberty?*

AY, yours and mine! How holds the line,
 Brothers at home who wait?
You who may sleep the while I keep
 Watch by the outer gate?

“Not mine the hand, not mine the stand
 That checks the invader's might,
Here in the trench, the gallant French
 Beside me through the night;

“Nor while the guns 'twixt angry suns
 Of dawn and darkness slay—
Not mine the fight alone, by night
 Or through the bleeding day.

THE GHOST

“Nay, yours the fight, by day, by night,
Brothers at home who wait—
Or do you sleep who yet should keep
Guard o’er the inner gate?

“Or do you lie at ease, and sigh
O’er tables softly spread,
Or in your wine some taint divine,
Or coarseness in your bread?

“Still go you rayed in rich brocade,
Giddy sister of mine?
Still do you frown upon your gown
Though it be silken-fine?

“*How goes the fight, how fares the night?*
You cry across the main.
O take you heed, my words do bleed
To make you answer plain!—

“Thus goes the fight, thus fares the night
Beyond the bloody sea:
Here at my post I die—my ghost
To haunt you fearfully!

“I die—but not by German shot,
Nor in the fray go down—

THE GHOST

Betrayed and caught I fall to naught
Tripped by a trailing gown!

I fall—but not by German shot;
I give the spirit up
While you, o'erfed with snowy bread
Still quaff your brimming cup.

Athirst I bleed, and there is need
To staunch my gaping wound,
And there is need of bread to feed
My body that hath swooned.

So fares the fight! So goes the night,
Brothers across the tide!
Here at my post I die—my ghost
Shall never leave your side.

There shall be gore forevermore
Upon your linen fine—
White linen fain to wipe the stain
Of woundings that are mine!

And there shall be the taste of me
Upon your lips forever.
“Peace!” you have cried—but I, denied,
Still cry you “Never, never!”

THE GHOST

How fares the night?
How goes the fight,
Brother across the sea?
How holds the line
That's yours and mine,
Warder of Liberty?

REVEILLE AND TAPS

(Ehrenbreitstein-am-Rhein, 1918: For Cadet Phillips
Daley, West Point.)

A BUGLE is a beautiful thing,
A bugle in the morning,
High in the bright air lifted,
High in the glinting sun—
Silver and clear, and warm as the South
Pressed to youth's proud singing mouth,
Its rippling notes rise up and run
Up and up to the very sun!
A bugle is a beautiful thing,
A bugle in the morning!

A bugle is a beautiful thing,
A bugle in the evening,
High in the dusking shadows held,
High to the coming star,
Golden and soft and pure it sings
Of peace and quiet and restful things,
Of mother and love and home afar
Of dreams come true and a lucky star—
A bugle is a beautiful thing,
A bugle in the evening!

JOYCE KILMER IN HEAVEN

WHAT saw you, singer, leaping from the sod,
Over the bloody rampart of your death?
What saw you when you drew your first free
breath

Full in the open meadow-fields of God?

Did the red bursting shells in rainbow hue
Break for you suddenly to flowery bloom?
Clamor to music fall, and smokes of doom
Blow soft like morning mists across the dew?

Did Michael of the Sword, saluting, greet you,
And over flaming parapet and scarp
David the Poet Soldier, with his harp,
Singing God's love and glory, come to greet
you?

Did Brigid of the virgin heart, regiven
Her bridelike loveliness, run hurrying, glad,
Leading the little children of Fochlad
To give you Irish welcome into Heaven?

JOYCE KILMER IN HEAVEN

Or was it Starry Main streets all alive
With happy businesses ; young angels' lessons
Learned from Old Poets? Trees and Delica-
tessens
With lights like spark-showers from the Twelve
Forty-five?

Heaven with Martin standing by to wait
His turn to say hello—just standing by
To let Dave Lilly show you a new fly—
Heaven where all is perfect, even bait!

Sing out and tell, O soldier lad! Cry back,
Call down from Heaven, brave and dear, and
say
How goes it now beyond dark Rouge
Bouquet,
Since Christ your comrade loosened up your
pack?

QUENTIN'S GRAVE

(Lieutenant Quentin Roosevelt, aged 20, killed in air-battle July 14, 1918; buried near Chambery on the Marne.)

SEARCHERS in the bloody grass,
Seek ye here his grave?

Where the reddened wheat fields wave,
Where the smokes of battle pass,
Seek ye Quentin in a grave—
Quentin in a grave?

Eaglet of a dauntless brood,
On the wings of high desire
Oh how swift did you aspire
To the upper solitude!

Yesterday, but yesterday,
You were safe within the nest:
Now what heavens do you test,
Pilot of the newborn day?

Yesterday within the nest
Safe, a fledgling young and weak:
Now there is no sunswept peak
Higher than your daring breast.

QUENTIN'S GRAVE

Yet it is not strange you went,
Lover of the skyey bird,
Who so long had harked and heard
Rush of wings of ravishment—

Rush of pinions, mighty urge
Of a mighty father's blood
Pulsing from the eternal flood
To revivify and purge . . .

Searchers, tarry not . . . not here . . .
Nay, lift up your eyes!
Far above blue Chambery's skies
Hear ye not his challenge clear?
Not in any grave he lies—
Quentin is not here!

. . .AND I SING!

(Hunger Region, Poland, 1920.)

LONG, long have I walked down the valley of
death,

In the shadow of death and despair,
My singing put by—aye, and even the breath
Of my song hushed and muted to prayer—

O, ever a prayer, that my eyes no more see,
But be blinded—no longer behold
The evil man is and man does—not to me,
But to others, his brothers of old:

O, ever a prayer, that my ears no more hear
The cry of the dying, be sealed
To the wail of the wounded, the curse and the
tear
Of the hurt who can never be healed:

Aye, ever a prayer, for that, futile, unmanned,
I must walk through the valley of pain
Impotent to heal or to help, by the hand
Of despair beckoned on . . . all in vain

. . . AND I SING

My prayer and my plea—ever sharper my ears
Are held, ever closer my eyes
Are pressed to the face that is furrowed by
tears,
To the voice that in agony cries:

And “Now will you sing?” wails the spirit of
death,
And “Now will you sing” moans the voice
Of night in my ear . . . yet my prayer in a
breath
Turns again to a song, to rejoice—

For here, in the valley of grief, where the path
Breaks sudden to plunge to the pit,
Where the plaint of the dying is stilled to the
wrath
Of the dead, unillumined, unlit—

Here, deepest and lost on the way, calm and
mild

In the face of a mother, the thing
I have seen!—all relit in the eyes of a child—
Leaps the pit, spans the night—

And I sing!

YOUNG POLAND

(Warsaw, 1920.)

NOT like a Niobe dissolved in tears
 With grief-bent sorrowing head,
Nor yet a Rachel whose long sorry years
 Will not be comforted—

But a young David who, with sword and song,
 Great-hearted, mighty-thewed,
Lifts up his motherland from age old wrong,
 In beauty all renewed.

RENEWAL

(Notre Dame, 1924.)

I

FROM dark horizons come, from woful
lands

Of age-worn promise and of broken vow,
Behold for me a new dawn's vision now,
Of youth and valour woven, built by hands
Of faith and aspiration! Swept from strands
Of stormbeat shoreways, where the bravest
bow

To heaving tumult, sudden my shaken prow
Strikes through a sunbright tide—my heart
expands,

My soul cries jubilant to hail the light,
My ear is sweetened that too long has
heard

A cry of hate and grieving through the night.
Now morning grows, and with it the swift
word

Of hope recalls me, with high summoning,
To lift my voice again to God—and sing!

RENEWAL

II

To lift my voice again to God and sing—
Not solely of the night; the sorrowing
hordes
Of darkened lands where the deep-cutting
swords
Of mailed power and lustful hate still wring
Enangered tribute from men's hearts; the wing
Of hope still wound and maim; the clash-
ing chords
Of vengeance strike: not of the wrathful
lords
Of might alone, but of dawn's bourgeoning:
Dawn and a world with every dawn renewed,
Whose brightening shores with visioning
arise,
High over storm and tide, in plenitude
Of heavenly promise, to my blinded eyes:
Dawn and a day of light and loving made
By young hands busy at their Master's
trade.

BRIGHT HORIZONS

(Cardinal Mercier: 1914-1926)

A LONG the smoking skyline of the world,
Fragile as dawn above a sea of blood,
His figure sudden tops the incarnadined flood;
Nor all war's anger in red fury hurled
Against him where the hosts of hate unroll
Their tides of darkness in a cloud of shame
Can dim the eager beauty, the pure flame,
The divine audacity, of his luminous soul. . . .
Now, quiet on the waters, and the star
Of peace rekindling morning in the sky,
He passes. . . Bright horizons! Still afar
You burn with beauty of that soul whose cry,
Announcing God from lips as frail as light
Summoned the daystar to uncrown the night.

Of Books

Dreams, books . . .
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.

—WORDSWORTH.

CHIPS

(For Harry McGuire.)

WILD eyed with the light of April in his
eyes,
Bright limbed with the light of April on his
body,
Warm and cool, cool and warm, with the heats
of the sun and the earth in his breathing,
The poet comes on a gusty wind,
Out of the green loamy air of the wood,
Running, running into the city,
Singing, singing—hear him sing!
Life and love and everything!

. . . I saw an old man sitting by the gates,
Over a meagre kettle, over an empty pot,
Fanning his fire with scanty breath,
Feeding his fires with
Chips
Chips
Chips.

CHIPS

“Go get you wisdom,” the old man said;
“Go get you wisdom—then you may sing
Of life and love and everything.”
(He talked in rhyme,
Meter and time,
And he fed his fire with chips, chips, chips.)
“Go get you wisdom. Your song annoys me.
Your capering puts a wind upon me.
Your lusty breathing blows out my fire. . .”
(Chips—chips—chips)

And the poet did as he was bid.
He got him wisdom, a basketful,
Chips from the block,
A wondrous stock,
Sayings and saws and elucidations,
Adages, laws, and adumbrations
Settled and said, writ down and done with—
Wisdom, wisdom, a wondrous stock!
Till weary at last he sat him down,
Cold in the heart and chilled to the marrow,
Old and peak-nosed, bald and yellow,
All the shine gone from his body,
All the sun-bronze, all the marble,
All the wild and the heat-and-cool
Gone from his body, gone from his eyes,

CHIPS

Gone from his bones, gone from his soul—
Sat him down by the gates of the town,
And builded him there, where the gusty air of

April came with a tug and a flair,
A pull, a kiss, a caress, and a chuckle—
Builded him there a lonely fire
To warm his palsy, to soothe his knuckle
Sore from its weary knock, knock, knock,
On the hard-locked doors of the wise and
learned—

Kindled him there a thin blue flame,
And fanned it slowly with scanty breath
And fed it over and over and over
With chips—chips—chips.

I saw an old man sitting in the street,
I heard an old man mumbling by the gate,
Shivering over a meagre pot,
Chattering over a beggar's fire. . .
And a wind came out of the loamy wood,
Beyond the town, beyond the field,
With a wild-eyed poet riding on it,
Shouting, capering, running, leaping,
Singing and whirling, whirling and singing
“Life and love and everything!”

CHIPS

“Go get you wisdom,” the old man cried,
Shielding his fire with his bony hands.
“Go get you wisdom—then you may sing
Of life and love and everything,” . . .
And his cracked old voice went mumbling on,
And he talked to himself and talked and
talked—
Meter and rhyme,
Meter and time—
As he sheltered his fire with scrawny claw,
As he fed his fire with chips—chips—chips.

And the poet did as he was bid. . .
(Chips . . . chips . . . chips . . .)

READING HOMER

SOUND me that eagle note again!

Strike me the proud-toned harp,

Definite, deep and sharp,

Lusty and strong—

A chord for the souls of men

To echo and lift and sing

With their hearts and their tongues afire

In a rousing ringing song,

Like the beat of an eagle's wing

At the break of day!

I am tired of the crystal string

And the spun-glass wire,

I am tired of the tenuous fingered lyre

And the twittering sparrow flight

Of this new, this delicate thing,

That the poetasters play—

Too fine, too brittle—it breaks

If the hand of a singing man, a bard

Pluck it or strike it hard.

Sound me that eagle note again!

Give me a song that shakes

The stars from the moony night

And the blood in the hearts of men!

OLD CLIPPERS

(Reading Conrad on a Transatlantic Liner.)

THE sea is lonely for them, and the tides
Under the shouting wind will never,
never
Sing quite the same old song again, nor ever
Run with the same wild clamor up the sides
Of this new steel-cut titan now that rides
With perfect pulse of engine, wheel, and lever,
Down the old courses, whose deep bosoms
sever
With dark reluctance where the keel divides.

The sea is lonely for them, and the gale
Cries in a frustrate anger to the deep,
“Where are my rocking masts, my stream-
ing spars,
Where is my plunging prow, my belling sail?
What watches now, gray helmsman, do you
keep,
Lost in the night beneath the questioning
stars?”

READING SHELLEY

TORRENT and cloud—and a tide of light—
Wine of a golden beam;
Windblown pipe and a wild wild harp
Struck in the moonlight's dream.

Challenge and song and the tears of a god
Shaking the humid air—
Moon that melts in a swimming sky,
Star that burns like a prayer.

Lark—and the dawn in a waft of dew;
Noon that is overbright—
Dusk, and the moth, and a lonely wave
Crying against the night. . .

MIRACLE

(For Charles L. O'Donnell.)

WHAT shall the sonnet be?—a chiselled
thing

Cut scrupulously from the marble's chill
Pure grandeur; something perfect, chaste
and still?

Or shall it be alive, and shall it sing?

What shall the sonnet be?—a challenging
That shall so glow and overflow and fill
The heart with feeling and the mind with
will

That on its word the soul shall rise a-wing?

This shall the sonnet be: of carven word,
Perfect and chaste to the minutest line,
Yet not by the poet's careful art alone
Fashioned and shaped, but as the soaring bird
That, touched of Heaven's Hand, with love
divine
Leaps lark-like, skyward, from the in-
sensate stone.

INA

POET! Strike the bright clear strings again
Of your harp so golden,
Pure and strong,
Singer of the olden
Day of song!

Sing your lyric chording now as when
Charlie Stoddard listened,
Rapt, apart,
And the hid tear glistened
Of Bret Harte. . .

Far in quiet Concord Whittier
Hears her young voice lifted,
Sweet and grave
Where the white sands, drifted,
Meet the wave.

Singing England hearkens too to her—
Hazelmere with willing
Heart gives ear;
Gabriel's sister stilling
Song for tear.

INA

Tennyson. . . Rossetti. . . farther still
Echoes that pure chord on
To the tomb
Where the soul of Gordon
Hushed in gloom,
Patient waits the Singer on the Hill,
By the western farland
Weaving slow
Laurel in a garland
For his woe—

Byron surely hears her! To the far
Isles Ionian ringing
Leaps her song,
Challenging the stinging
Voice of wrong.

Albion . . . and Hellas . . . till a star
Answers with bright beaming
O'er the green
Woods of Sylva's dreaming—
Queen to queen!

Singer dear, O lift your voice again!
Strike the starry golden
Sweet refrain,
Sing once more the olden
Bardic strain!



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